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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
DEFENCE DEPARTMENT

RESOLUTION

*New Delhi, the 21st January 1947*

No. 162.—Early in April, 1946, the following announcement was made by the Government of India:—

"The Central Government has been pleased to appoint a Commission of Enquiry to enquire into and report on the causes and origin of the recent mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy in February, 1946. The Commission of Enquiry will consist of:—

*Chairman*

The Hon'ble Sir Saiyed Fazl Ali, Chief Justice of Patna High Court.

*Judicial Members*

Mr. Justice K. S. Krishnaswami Iyenger, Chief Justice, Cochin State.

Mr. Justice Mahajan, Judge, Lahore High Court.

*Service Members*

Vice Admiral W. R. Paterson, C.B., C.V.O., Flag Officer Commanding, 5th Cruiser Squadron, East Indies Fleet.

Major General T. W. Rees, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.C., Indian Army, Commanding the 4th Indian Division.

2. The report of the Commission has now been received and considered by the Government of India. In the observations that follow, the Government first recapitulate briefly the main conclusions of the Commission; secondly, state the remedial action so far taken, and finally record their own conclusions.

*MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMISSION*

3. The report of the Commission was unanimous, the members being agreed that the basic cause of the mutiny was widespread discontent arising mainly from a number of service grievances which had remained unredressed for some time and were aggravated by the political situation.

4. The Commission emphasised the extremely widespread nature of the disorder and the rapidity with which it spread. Men of all communities took part, irrespective of the part of INDIA from which they came or the political opinions they may have held; and in the opinion of the Commission this could not have been so unless almost all the Service had been dissatisfied in some way or another with Service conditions.

5. The investigations of the Commission led them to believe that among the first of these Service grievances was the incorrect and extremely rosy picture held out by the recruiting authorities to recruits amounting in some cases to systematic deception. The latter were led to expect much more rapid promotion than they could in fact have any hope of receiving, and they had not

understood that they would be expected to carry out duties such as cleaning ship, which (though commonly performed by ratings in all navies of the world) are of a menial nature. In some cases they had not understood that they would have to eat in a common mess.

6. But in the opinion of the Commission, the primary causes of discontent in the Service were lack of contact between officers and ratings and a feeling of discrimination. Some cases were reported to the Commission of ill-treatment and abuse by officers, but the main point was the lack of a patient and sympathetic attitude to genuine grievances. This gave rise to a feeling of resentment and helplessness among the ratings. There was also in the opinion of the Commission, a strong and widespread feeling that racial discrimination existed in the Service, the main points being that ratings were denied certain concessions and privileges enjoyed by ratings of the Royal Navy, and that the European officers of the R.I.N. regarded them with contempt as inferiors. There can also be no doubt that some of the Indian officers shared this feeling and considered that they had not received due consideration for promotion, that they were not taken into confidence in important matters, and that they also were regarded as inferiors. Many temporary officers had no real understanding of the men or sympathy with them and this was particularly the case among the non-Asiatic officers. It may here be mentioned that there were officers of nineteen different nationalities, some of whom belonged to nations observing discriminatory laws. Those on loan from the R.N. in particular, but also some of those temporarily in the Indian Service, felt that they were exiles serving their term away from home and wished only that they might be allowed to leave in the not too distant future.

7. The next main grievance related to food, partly to the quality of the rations issued by the R.I.A.S.C., and partly to the inefficiency of the cooks employed by the R.I.N. Both the lack of skilful cooks, and the delay in starting a Supply Branch in the R.I.N., are due to the rapid expansion of the Service; but both could have been to a considerable extent overcome had the officers paid more attention to the complaints made to them.

8. There were a number of other grievances. The pay of the R.I.N., is related to Indian conditions and to comparable categories of the Indian Army and the Royal Indian Air Force, but the ratings tend to compare their pay not with that of the Army, but with that of the Mercantile Marine, or of the other navies with which they come into contact, that is to say the Royal Navy and the navies of CEYLON and BURMA. When it was pointed out to the ratings that their pay was lower than that of the Royal Navy because of the general standard of life in the country, they complained that their officers, Indian as well as European, were more highly paid than those of the R.N. and that thus there was a much wider gap between the pay of ratings and the pay of officers. It was the conclusion of the Commission that the ratings would have been satisfied had their pay been the same as the BURMA and CEYLON navies whom they regarded as less efficient than themselves. It was also pointed out that while in the Royal Navy and the British Army the men either receive a marriage allowance, or are provided with married quarters, and while in the Indian Army married quarters are provided on a recognised scale, for the R.I.N. there was neither a marriage allowance nor married quarters. The men also considered that when their families were present in BOMBAY they should have received better medical facilities. Again, pensions, and particularly those of Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Warrant Officers, were low in relation to those of other Services and still more so in relation to the cost of living. Another grievance related to the class of accommodation allowed on railway journeys. This was related to the concessions allowed to Army personnel of similar ranks, but was compared by Indian ratings with the 2nd class travel permitted to all ratings of the Royal Navy.

9. There were other minor points. The ratings believed, though erroneously, that minesweeping allowance was paid to R.N. ratings in the Indian Ocean, but not to themselves; they considered that the prices in canteens available to the R.I.N. were too high, and compared these unfavourably with the N.A.A.F.I. canteens which were open to the R.N. Further, it was a grievance that Indian ratings were not allowed to use N.A.A.F.I. canteens in places where there were no canteens run by the Indian Canteen Board. They wanted canteen with a wider range of articles at cheap prices.

10. There was also a feeling of injustice and frustration owing to the lack of promotion to commissioned and warrant ranks. In part this proceeded from the unjustifiable hopes held out to ratings at the time of their recruitment. But it was also due to a comparison with the possibilities of promotion in the Army. The announcement that commissions would be offered to 66 Indian officers in the first place was widely interpreted as meaning that commissions would be offered to this number of Indians only. The feeling among reserve officers that they were not being given a fair share of the permanent commissions which would be available after the war undoubtedly spread to the ratings.

11. While these grievances were mounting up, the process of demobilization began and led not only to a number of complaints as to the manner in which it was carried out, but to a sense of despair and frustration in that many of the men had supposed that they would obtain permanent employment, but found that they would not.

12. The political aspect of the mutiny was indirectly due to the Service grievances mentioned above. There were no doubt a few men who were politically conscious when they entered the Service, but for the majority, political doctrines began to affect their minds only because they had begun to feel that no attention was paid to their grievances and that this was due to foreign domination. Further, the glorification of the INA had undoubtedly a most unsettling effect on the morale of the men of the Service.

13. Many of these troubles arose from the fact that INDIA'S navy before the war was small and that it expanded too rapidly. The effects of over-expansion on the Service were that a number of unsuitable officers and ratings were recruited, and owing to the small number of regular officers new officers, did not receive so thorough a training as could have been wished. Those who really knew their work found themselves hopelessly overworked in trying to make up for the shortcomings of others, and there was a shortage of well trained Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers.

14. The Commission recorded also certain allegations made against Naval HQ, though they did not pronounce any definite opinion as to their correctness or otherwise. The main allegations were that there was lack of confidence throughout the Service in Naval HQ and a feeling that Naval HQ were out of touch with ships and shore establishments that there was favouritism in the matter of appointments, too slavish a reliance on the pattern of the RN and too frequent transfers of officers. They recommended that the organization of Naval HQ and its relations with the Military Finance and War Departments should be examined.

15. This was the state of feeling when the Commander King incident took place. The incident has already been the subject of judicial proceedings and does not require further comment; although in itself trivial in comparison with the events which followed, it was sufficient in the state of feeling which existed in the Service to provide the occasion for a general conflagration. It was the occasion rather than the cause of the mutiny.

16. The Commission considered that the Flag Officer, Commanding Bombay and his officers in Bombay did not realize the gravity of the situation

at a sufficiently early stage and failed to take early and immediate steps to re-assert authority with firmness and at the same time to take sympathetic steps to alleviate the complaints. They felt that but for these Commissions this great catastrophe might never have happened.

STEPS TAKEN SINCE THE MUTINY TO REMOVE DISCONTENT

17. Immediately after the mutiny a process of enquiry into grievances was begun and steps were taken to meet them as far as possible; and since the Report of the Commission, this process has continued. Priority is being given to the raising of the morale of the RIN by all possible means and to the instilling in all officers of the basic principles of managing their men. Training in Divisional Officers' duties which had to be abandoned during the war owing to rapid expansion, has been resumed for all junior officers.

18. The Government of India agree that the methods employed by individual recruiters were in some cases unsatisfactory and that they were to blame for making promises which in many cases they knew to be untrue. Naval HQ have issued a new set of basic instructions regarding standards of entry and this has been distributed to recruiting officers. These instructions are clear and concise. A new set of basic instructions regarding Boy Entry was sent to recruiting officers actually before the mutiny on the 12th February 1946. Instructions have now been issued to recruiting officers to make it perfectly clear to all recruits that they will have to clean ship, and the meaning of this duty; that food will be cooked in a common galley; and that they must not entertain undue optimism about promotion. Those pamphlets which gave too rosy a picture of Service conditions have been withdrawn.

19. The question of food has also received much attention. The Supply Service has become an Inter-Service organisation and is no longer purely Army; RIN and RIAF officers becoming an integral part of the machine. A separate Supply and Secretariat Branch as in the Royal Navy has been started in the RIN. Before the war, many of the duties which in the RN are performed by highly trained officers of this Branch were carried out by Warrant Officers promoted from the lower deck. The Supply Branch was formed in 1943, but naturally the officers were at first inexperienced. It has however now been systematically reorganized with the assistance of experienced Supply officers from the RN, and the results of this re-organization are now becoming apparent.

20. To improve the preparation and cooking of food, the RIN Cookery School has been overhauled and as many cooks as possible are being sent there for training, additional cooks being recruited in the meantime. It will however take some time to bring the cooks up to the required standard. Mess committees composed of the men themselves have been started in all ships and shore establishments, while in some, suggestion books exist, are regularly used by ratings and are examined daily by the Officer of the day.

21. The Government of India concur in the view of the Commission that many of the causes from which the mutiny arose were due to over-rapid expansion. Naval H. Q. have recommended that an adequate safety margin of regular officers and ratings should be maintained in peace in the Training, Drafting and Leave Reserve, and that an efficient training reserve must be built up in peace; the Government of India are considering their recommendations. But perhaps the most important requirement is to ensure that the best type of officers and men are recruited. Efforts are now being directed to make the Divisional system more efficient, to arrange extended Courses in man-management and welfare for junior officers and young Petty Officers, to see that complaints are dealt with speedily and correctly, to resume regular official inspections of ships and establishments by senior officers, a custom which during the war necessarily fell into disuse; and to organise the Service into Squadrons, Flotillas and Areas under experienced officers who are directed to pay special attention to man-management and seamanship.

22. As regards European officers, the rules about learning the language will now again be strictly enforced, and officers will be encouraged by all means to acquire a full knowledge of their men, not only in the Service but in their homes. All officers of the RIN are to be reminded to be sympathetic in their dealings with the men with whom they work; that they should deal firmly and fairly with them and take care that all reasonable facilities are given for the practise of religious observances.

23. Everything possible is being done to eliminate any suspicion of racial discrimination, and Indian officers are being posted to the command of ships, to posts of Executive Officer in ships, and to higher staff appointments, as they acquire sufficient seniority and experience.

24. The questions of pay, allowances and pensions and other conditions of service are being examined by the Post-War Pay Committee, an inter-service body appointed by the Defence Department, who will make recommendations to the Government of India. The Post-War Pay Committee has also specially examined the question of the classes of railway travel appropriate to the various ranks of the three services and are submitting their recommendations.

25. With regard to canteens, what is required is that the present naval canteens should be improved in India, and this is being done; and that when outside India the RIN should be permitted to use the NAAFI. This question is being taken up with the Admiralty. Even so it should be realised that comparison cannot legitimately be drawn between the prices charged for dutiable articles in Indian canteens and NAAFI canteens because the Customs Regulations affecting each are quite different depending on the place and circumstances in which each may be operating.

26. The possibility of widening the scope for promotion to commissioned rank from the lower deck is being examined and steps are being taken to nationalize the RIN completely. Only Indians will be selected for permanent commissions, and a number of causes of misunderstanding on this subject, for example the belief that the number of Indian officers who would be taken in from the Reserve is limited to 66, have been removed.

27. With regard to politics, the Government of India believe that healthy interest in the affairs of the country is to be encouraged but that the use of politics as a lever to get grievances redressed is highly dangerous and must be discouraged in the interests of the Service. Officers and men are being instructed that although every man is entitled to his personal views, participation in party politics is not admissible to members of such a Service.

28. The rapid transfer of officers was undoubtedly a contributory cause of the mutiny and was necessitated during the war by the shortage of trained officers and operational requirements. There was insufficient opportunity for officers to get to know their men or their ships and this led to confusion of accounts relating to pay, stores, correspondence, etc. It is now intended that officers and ratings shall be appointed to ships and establishments for minimum periods of one year for an afloat appointment and two years for a shore job.

29. The re-organization of Naval H.Q. in DELHI is already taking place, and a similar re-organization will shortly be started in BOMBAY.

#### CONCLUSIONS

30. The lessons of the Mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy must not be forgotten. They are:—

- (a) That officers must consider the welfare of their men before their own comfort or safety, and that grievances must not be explained away but redressed.
- (b) Too rapid an expansion without proper provision for the training of officers is unwise and the aim of the service in peace must be to prepare for expansion in war.

If these lessons are remembered, this tragic chapter in the history of the RIN may not be entirely without good results. While the Government of India wish that every officer of the RIN should remember these lessons, they feel that in present circumstances it would serve no useful purpose to dwell too much on the past or to indulge in recriminations against those who made mistakes during the stress of war and in the abnormal conditions which followed.

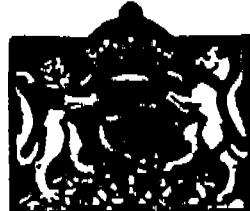
81. It is now the task of the Royal Indian Navy to build up a national service responsive to the national will, proud of its record in war and looking forward to a fine future. In building up such a structure, the first requirement is that the Service must have confidence in itself. In this, undoubtedly one of the first factors will be the gradual nationalization of the officers' cadre. The Interim Government propose to take every step to put right the grievances revealed by this report, and they are confident that the Navy will respond, and that its future will be a matter for pride to the whole country.

82. A copy of the Summary of the Report is published as an annexure to this Resolution.

Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India*, and distributed to all Provincial Governments and Administrations, all Departments of the Government of India, Political Department, Cabinet Secretariat, all Branches of Armed Forces Headquarters, P.S. V., P.S. (C), F.A.D. & S., and M.A.G.

**G. S. BHALJA,**  
Secy. to the Govt. of India.

## ANNEXURE F



Summary of the Report of the  
Commission of Enquiry into the  
R.I.N. Mutiny, February 1946

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

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Used in the Summary of the Report of the R. I. N. Commission of Enquiry, 1946

B. O. R.	British Other Rank.
C. O.	Commanding Officer.
C. P. O.	Chief Petty Officer.
F. O. B.	Flag Officer Bombay.
F. O. C. R. I. N.	Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy.
H. O.	Hostilities Only.
N. H. Q.	Naval Headquarters.
P. O.	Petty Officer.
R. A. F.	Royal Air Force.
R. I. A. F.	Royal Indian Air Force.
R. I. A. S. C.	Royal Indian Army Service Corps
R. I. N.	Royal Indian Navy.
R. N.	Royal Navy.
V. C. O.	Viceroy's Commissioned Officer.
W. O.	Warrant Officer

### FOREWORD

Early in April 1946, the following announcement was made by the Government of India in the War Department:—

“The Central Government has been pleased to appoint a Commission of Enquiry to enquire into and report on the causes and origin of the recent mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946. The Commission of Enquiry will consist of:—

*Chairman*.—The Hon'ble Sir Saiyad Fazl Ali, Chief Justice of Patna High Court.

*Judicial Members*.—Mr. Justice K. S. Krishnaswami Iyenger, Chief Justice, Kochin State.

Mr. Justice Mahajan, Judge, Lahore High Court.

*Service Members*.—Vice Admiral W. R. Patterson, C.B., C.V.O., Flag Officer Commanding, Cruiser Squadron East Indies Fleet.

Major-General T. W. Rees, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.C., Indian Army, Commanding the 4th Indian Division.”

The report of the Commission was signed on 10th July 1946. It consists of 598 pages. For the convenience of those concerned, the War Department has prepared this summary. To facilitate reference from the summary to the Original Report, the paragraphs in the report have been numbered.

P. MASON,

*Joint Secy. to the Govt. of India, War Dep'tt.*

NEW DELHI;

The 21st September, 1946.

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**SUMMARY**

(The figures in brackets refer to paragraphs in the Report)

**CHAPTER I.—HISTORICAL**

1. The origin of the Indian Navy goes back to the Honourable The East India Company's Navy in 1612. It was temporarily expanded from time to time to meet various emergencies. During the years 1914-18 the six ships of the Royal Indian Marine served as Auxiliary Cruisers. (1-2)

2. **Post-war Retrenchment.**—After the war as a result of the Inchcape Committee the Royal Indian Marine was considerably reduced. The service was left with a Survey Department, a Dockyard and about 4 sloops employed for non-combatant duties. In 1925 the Government of India accepted the recommendations of the Rawlinson Committee for the reorganisation of the Service as a combatant force with an initial strength of 4 armed sloops, 2 patrol vessels, 4 minesweeping trawlers, 2 surveying ships and a depot ship and an Act was passed enabling India to have a Navy. (8-4)

3. In August 1934 the Indian Naval Discipline Act was passed by both houses of legislature and on 2nd October 1934 the Royal Indian Marine became the Royal Indian Navy. (4)

In March 1938 in pursuance of the agreement between His Majesty's Government and Government of India the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy submitted a nine year plan for the expansion of the Service with a view to enabling it to undertake responsibility for the local naval defence of Indian ports. (6-7)

The plan was examined in detail by the Chatfield Committee of experts on defence of India. Before action could be taken on the conclusions of the Committee the war broke out. (8)

4. The strength of the Royal Indian Navy at that time, was 5 sloops, one surveying ship, one trawler and one patrol ship as tender to training establishments; the Shore Establishments were Naval Headquarters, Naval Barracks, Signal School, Gunnery School, Mechanical Training Establishment and Boys Training Establishment, all located in the Royal Indian Navy Dockyard, Bombay. Number of commissioned officers was 109, warrant officers 68, ratings 1,449. Besides there was a skeleton Sea Transport service at Bombay, Karachi and Calcutta. (9)

The Naval Headquarters moved to New Delhi in March 1941. (10)

5. **Expansion during the war.**—The strength of officers and ratings increased as shown below:—

	Officers (including Warrant Officers)	Rating*
September 1939 . . . . .	108	1,478
December 1945 . . . . .	2,652	21,193

Of these 1,877 were British, 949 Indians, 256 Anglo-Indians and 70 "Others". Throughout the period of war but especially in 1941-42 and later in 1944 the rates of pay for various branches of Royal Indian Navy ratings had to

be increased to attract more and better types of recruits and an upward revision of scales of pay was invariably followed by improvement in the recruitment situation. (14)

Secondly, according to Admiral Godfrey, a planned expansion of the service was not embarked upon earlier on in the war owing to dilatoriness in arriving at a decision and the expansion of the Service was not properly planned. Between 1939 and 1941 the expansion was comparatively slow with the result that the "Army had a clear field for recruitment and secured the cream of the population". Subsequently when the expansion did start the Navy had inadequate training facilities to cope with the numbers recruited and the short time the recruits spent in training establishments was devoted to technical training at the expense of disciplinary training. (15-16)

Thirdly, wastage by desertion was a very serious matter and by this from 33½ per cent. to 50 per cent. of recruits were lost to this Service. To attain the target strength of 27,651 a total of over 43,000 men had to be recruited. To remedy this, action was taken on the complaints among recruits of bad discipline, bad food, unsympathetic treatment and other teething troubles. (18)

Many desertions were directly attributable to the discontent in the Service caused by the fact that recruiting officers gave recruits a misleadingly optimistic picture of life in the service. (19)

Discipline of the service during the war appears to have been satisfactory on the whole although there were mutinies. (22)

6. **Contact with other Navies and Foreign Countries.**—The war brought to R.I.N. ratings many opportunities of visiting foreign countries and their discoveries particularly in regard to pay and amenities available in the Royal Navy and the other Navies of the Empire had an unsettling effect on their minds. (23)

7. **Demobilization.**—Owing to sudden end of war against Japan demobilization of personnel started before plans could be perfected.

Lack of planning entailed overcrowding in demobilization centres, grievances regarding compulsory return of kit, dissatisfaction with release benefits and resettlement schemes, and a general disillusionment due to lack of prospects. (24)

8. The Commission is in general agreement with Admiral Godfrey in that—

(a) The chronic shortage of experienced officers in the Service was caused by recruitment being stopped between 1921 and 1928.

(b) The R.I.N. was asked to take on new commitments and it was bad for the service to take on so much and to inflate itself without acquiring necessary officers or administrative staff.

(c) The risk of post-war trouble had to be accepted.

(d) The Mutiny may be regarded as a "casualty" arising out of the vigour with which India carried on with the War.

(e) The mutiny could have been avoided if the R.I.N. had continued the "go slow" policy between 1942-45. (25)

The R.I.N. expanded very rapidly during the war from a small nucleus. On the abrupt ending of the war, it was faced with a rapid contraction. The war having been won the main object was lost. Contact between officers and men was lost, loyalty disappeared, and team spirit vanished. Men had insufficient work and they were unlikely to be interested in their work when they expected to be out of the service soon. Under such conditions, even minor grievances become magnified and bad discipline results. This is the background against which the causes of the mutiny have to be explored. (26)

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CHAPTER II.—PREVIOUS MUTINIES

9. The Commission has examined the records of previous mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy since 1942. There were nine mutinies during the period March 1942 to April 1945, both on ships afloat and shore establishments. The ostensible reasons for these mutinies related to grievances regarding pay, scale and quality of rations, bad cooking, inadequate arrangements for sleeping, refusal of men to carry out certain duties like "clean ship", sweeping the decks, sentry duties, messenger duties, impossible religious demands for erection of mosques, etc., and for special leave to say prayers on Friday in the mosques. (27-86)

10. But in nearly all cases the primary causes were—

(a) mishandling of the situation by the officers and lack of contact and trust between officers and men. This was Admiral Fitzherbert's diagnosis three years ago and in the Commission's opinion holds good of the recent mutiny also; (37-38)

(b) the officers' ignorance of men's religious and social customs and consequently a rigid and unimaginative interpretation of Naval Regulations especially where demand for observance of religious duties was concerned; (41)

(c) men's dissatisfaction with the terms and conditions of service about which they were misinformed by the recruiting authorities at the time of enrolment; (89, 42)

(d) lack of faith in the possibility of redress of their grievances by higher authority. (89)

11. These previous mutinies have a bearing on this mutiny not only inasmuch as they bequeathed a state of discontent and indiscipline which contributed in no small degree to the present mutiny and they should have served as warnings to the Naval authorities to find out whether there was any danger lurking round the corner. (40)

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## CHAPTER III.—THE WORLD SITUATION

12. At the end of the war the world was in a state of unrest both political and economic. The transition from war time to peace time economy was inevitably attended by strained and unsettled relations between the employers and the employees owing to troubles over retrenchment, wages and costs and a sense of general disillusionment with the fruits of victory. (44, 45, 47, 49-50)

13. The political situation was equally tense particularly in India where the effect of demand for freedom and the withdrawal of British control was reinforced by an insistent demand from all parties for withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia and later by general sympathy with I.N.A. and agitation for their release. (51, 55, 59)

14. Men of the Royal Indian Navy who had become politically conscious through the influences of the Press, the Radio, contact with Royal Navy and other Navies of the Empire, while serving abroad in foreign waters and experience of colour bar in South Africa, were particularly affected by the prevailing political unrest. (52)

15. Other factors which helped in undermining the discipline of the Service were the history of previous mutinies in the Royal Indian Navy, and the mutiny in the R.A.F. and R.I.A.F. misleadingly described as "Strike", and the apparent leniency of authorities in handling it. (56).

## CHAPTER IV.—HOW THE MUTINY ORIGINATED AND SPREAD

**16. Origin.**—The mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946 originated in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR" and then spread to various ships and establishments. Only a few—10 ships and 2 shore establishments—remained unaffected. (81-82)

**17. Number of ships and establishments.—**

*Which took part in mutiny:—*

*Bombay.*—11 establishments and 45 ships, besides 11 miscellaneous ships and 4 flotillas joined the mutiny. (83)

*Karachi.*—4 shore establishments and 3 ships. (84).

*Madras.*—The base. (85)

*Calcutta.*—The base and one ship. (86).

*Cochin.*—The base and two ships

*Visagapatam.*—The base and 4 ships. (88).

*Mandapam.*—One ship. (89)

*Andamans.*—7 ships.

*Delhi.*—H.M.I.S. "INDIA". } (72, 73).

**18. Duration of the mutiny.**—Ranging from 7 days in Calcutta and 6 days in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR" to 2 days in Karachi and one day in Madras. (74-83).

**19. Casualties.—Killed**—9 ratings and 1 officer.

Wounded 41 ratings (including 2 B.O.Rs.) and 1 officer. (84).

**20. Salient Features.**—Processions and sporadic hooliganism in Bombay and Karachi. Exchange of firing between the ratings and military in Karachi H.M.I.S. "HINDUSTAN" and Bombay CASTLE BARRACKS. Elsewhere mutineers non-violent, went on hunger strike or refused to work. (85).

**21. Causes stated by the mutineers.**—"TALWAR" ratings furnished a list of grievances. Other ship mutinied either in sympathy with "TALWAR" as a protest against firing by the military or from a desire not to let down their comrades by keeping out of it. (86)

**22. Brief account of the mutiny and events leading upto it****(1) Bombay**

*H.M.I.S. "TALWAR".*—A series of acts of indiscipline preceded the mutiny in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR", the R.I.N. Signal School, where in addition to about 700 communication ratings under training 800 ratings of the "draft reserve" including those awaiting demobilization were accommodated. (88).

As early as 30th November 1945, certain political and anti-British slogans were written in many places in this establishment. These slogans appeared again on the night of 1st/2nd February. L/Tel B. C. Dutt was placed under arrest. On 6th and 7th February slogans were written on the C. O.'s car. (89, 90)

On the 9th February the ratings put in a request against Commander King for having used abusive language towards them on the 8th February when he entered the ratings' barracks and reprimanded them for making the alleged catcalls at W.R.I.Ns. The request was forwarded in writing on 18th February, the morning of the mutiny. (90-91)

On the 17th February the ratings refused to eat an unusual preparation of dal served to them. The Duty Officer dealt with the matter and thinking he settled it satisfactorily did not inform the Commanding Officer. (94).

But the following day on 18th February a large number of ratings refused breakfast and declined to fall in for parade. The entire establishment was in a

state of open mutiny. Visits of Flag Officer Bombay and his advice to ratings to return to duty did not help. No attempt made to isolate "TALWAR" (98-97)

On the 19th February the F.O.B. met the representatives of the ratings who put forward 14 main demands which included those for Royal Navy rates of pay and allowances, better food, better release benefits and also political demands for release of I.N.A. personnel and withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia. (98-99)

The mutiny spread to other ships and establishments. Congress and Muslim League flags were hoisted and the ratings marched in procession in the town shouting slogans and carrying placards. (100)

On 20th February military pickets were posted outside "TALWAR" and CASTLE BARRACKS to stop men leaving those establishments. Exchange of fire between the military and naval ratings on the 21st. (101-102)

On the 21st the Military guard tried to prevent ratings coming out from CASTLE BARRACKS about 0830. The result was a disturbance ending in firing by the military. On the same day, instructions were issued by F.O.B. with the concurrence of F.O.C.R.I.N. regarding officers leaving their ships. Most officers, therefore, left their ships. (103)

On 21st February Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy broadcast a message to the mutineers dealing with some of the grievances of the ratings and impressing on them the Government's determination not to give in to violence. (104)

On 22nd February there was general disorder accompanied by considerable looting and hooliganism in Bombay. Millhands and railway workers struck work in sympathy with R.I.N. ratings. (106)

On the same day Sardar Patel, the Congress leader condemned the mutineers' defiance of authority and advised the R.I.N. ratings to surrender. On Saturday the 28th February the Ratings' Committee decided to surrender unconditionally which was soon carried out. (107) (For detailed account of events in "TALWAR" see paragraphs 108-128).

**"CASTLE BARRACKS".**—The ratings in CASTLE BARRACKS mutinied on 19th February 1946. Commander Streatfield James, the Commanding Officer was received with stones and had to force his way through the gate. Efforts at pacification failed as ratings from outside continuously incited the moderate elements and ratings formed a procession and a few hotheads resorted to violent action. (125, 126)

Mutineers from other establishments forced entry into CASTLE BARRACKS and as a result of discussion with the military authority the military guards were placed on the establishment. (129)

The arrival of military was resented. Stones and other missiles were thrown at the military guard inside the CASTLE BARRACKS. On this the guards were withdrawn from inside and a post was established outside the gate to cover all exits and entrances. (180)

On Thursday the 21st February firing had to be resorted to prevent the ratings from breaking out of the barracks and was replied to by the ratings from the rampart. The mutineers broke open the armoury and obtained rifles and ammunition. (138, 189)

The surrender took place on the 28th as a result of the decision of the Ratings' Central Strike Committee. (107)

**H.M.I.S. "HAMILA".**—The immediate cause of the mutiny in this establishment was sympathy towards H.M.I.S. "TALWAR" and the influence of

men from outside establishments. Its main features were processions, shouting of political slogans, sporadic stone throwing and participation of one R.I.N. officer, Lt. Subhani, (140-146)

*H.M.I.S. "Machlimar".—(147, 148)*

*H.M.I.S. "Feroze".—(149)*

The mutiny took the shape of hunger strike and no more. (157)

*Other ships affected in Bombay:—*

*H.M.I.S. "JUMNA", H.M.I.S. "SIND", H.M.I.S. "MAHRATTA".*

*H.M.I.S. "ASSAM". (150-155)*

*H.M.I.S. "NARBADA", H.M.I.S. "CLIVE" H.M.I.S. "LAWRENCE".*

*H.M.I.S. "PUNJAB". (163-167) H.M.I.S. "KUMAON".*

In some of these ships particularly "JUMNA", "NARBADA" and "KUMAON" the guns were manned and pointed towards the town.

*Shore establishments near Bombay:—*

*H.M.I.S. "KAKAURI"—the demobilization centre.*

*H.M.I.S. "CHEETAH", H.M.I.S. "AKBAR". (160-162)*

*H.M.I.S. "SHIVAJI" (158) and R.I.N. Hospital at Sewri.*

*Trawlers anchored in Bombay:—*

Some 11 trawlers anchored in Bombay harbour also staged sympathetic mutiny. (168)

## (2) Karachi

The shore establishments affected were:—

*H.M.I.S. "BAHADUR", H.M.I.S. "HIMALAYA", H.M.I.S. "CHAMAK".*

The two ships that mutinied were:—

*H.M.I.S. "HINDUSTAN" and H.M.I.S. "TRAVANCORE".*

*H.M.I.S. "Bahadur".—The mutiny started with complaints against the quality of atta on the 20th February. (169)*

Its main features were general rowdyism, jeering and shouting at the time of colours, lowering of ensign and hoisting of "Jai Hind" flag, procession in body towards H.M.I.S. "HINDUSTAN". The ostensible grievances represented to the Commanding Officer were demands for Royal Navy rates of pay and Upper Class railway travel and married quarters. (170)

*H.M.I.S. "Himalaya".—The mutineers broke open cells, smashed glass windows and damaged a motor vehicle.*

Some of them joined the ratings from H.M.I.S. "BAHADUR" and H.M.I.S. "CHAMAK", seized a landing craft and proceeded to "HINDUSTAN". They were prevented from boarding the ship by the action of military who followed them in a boat. (172)

*H.M.I.S. "Chamak".—In general the "CHAMAK" ratings remained non-violent and even resisted the entry in "CHAMAK" of mutineers from "BAHADUR" and "HIMALAYA". Some of them, however, joined them later and marched in procession towards the jetty. (173)*

*H.M.I.S. "Hindustan".—The mutiny began on the 20th with 11 men breaking ship, shouting and gesticulating 2 hours before the ship was to sail. On Captain's addressing the ship's company a number of demands were presented and they included immediate removal of First Lieutenant for his insulting behaviour. (174)*

Later the "HINDUSTAN" ratings were joined by number of ratings from the establishments and two landing crafts packed with R.I.N. ratings and

followed by military, from Manora appeared. But matter was precipitated by the thoughtless action of a military officer who to prevent the ratings from boarding the ship fired several shots in that direction. (175)

The ultimatum of military authorities to surrender was not obeyed and at 1030 hours on the 22nd February the military opened fire on "HINDUSTAN". She surrendered after 20 minutes. 7 ratings died and several were injured. (176)

*H.M.I.S. "Travancore".*—The mutineers were not violent. Their demonstration took the form of shouting of slogans. About 50 per cent. of those who took part did do through threats. (177)

(3) *Jamnagar*

*H.M.I.S. "VALSURA"*—the Torpedo School.—In spite of the disturbing effect of the news from Bombay and the incitement of ratings coming from Bombay with exaggerated and inflammatory stories and typed copies of editorials from *Free Press Journal* the establishment continued to be normal until the 23rd February when the ratings heard on the Radio that the R.I.N. Torpedo School had not taken part in the strike.

This was construed as an act of bad faith towards their comrades. The ratings therefore refused to carry out the normal routine and remained in barracks.

This non-violent sympathetic mutiny was called off the next day. (179-182)

(4) *Calcutta*

*H.M.I.S. "Hooghly"*—Mutineers remained peaceful. (183)

(5) *Delhi*.

*H.M.I.S. "India"*. (184).

(6) *Madras*.

*H.M.I.S. "Adyar"*. (184)

Mutiny originated in the ratings desire to show sympathy with their comrades in Bombay and their demands.

Its manifestations were hoisting of congress flag, shouting slogans and marching down in processions

(7) *Vizagapatam*

The mutiny started with a number of ratings leaving the base, pulling down the ensign and rushing towards the jetty where they shouted to the ratings on *H.M.I.S. "SONAVATI"* and *H.M.I.S. "AHMADABAD"* to join them. A number of motor boats were seized. The ratings marched in procession in the town. Later they were rounded up by the military and confined in a camp.

Most of them subsequently expressed a desire to return to work and were allowed to do so. A few ring leaders were detained. Other ships affected were "SHILLONG" and *H.D.M.C. FLOTILLA*. (185-189)

(8) *Cochin*

Some trouble on board *H.M.I.S. "BARODA"*. (157)

In the base orderly demonstration and shouting of slogans at Willingdon Island on 22nd February on receipt of news from Bombay. Men stopped work till Bombay mutiny ended. (189-A)

(9) *Aden*

48 ratings at Aden left station. Went on hunger strike as a mark of sympathy with R.I.N. ratings in Bombay. No violence or insubordination. (190)

(10) *Andamans*

37th Minesweeping Flotilla.

Seven ships were affected:—

“ROHILKHAND”, “DECCAN”, “BENGAL”, “CARNATIC” “BIHAR”, “KITSNA” and “BALUCHISTAN”. (191-193).

## CHAPTER V.—CAUSES OF THE MUTINY—BROADLY CLASSIFIED

23. Having considered evidence on about 26 questions concerning the mutiny the Commission are of the opinion that the origin and causes of the mutiny lay in the following—

**A.** Discontent due to grievances;

**B.** Low morale and bad management of men and the unsuitability of a number of the ratings.

**C.** Politics; and

**D.** Outbreak of mutiny in H.M.I.S. “TALWAR”. (194-196)

## CHAPTER VI.—RECRUITMENT AND HOW IT CAUSED DISCONTENT

24. **Complaint of misrepresentation at the time of recruitment.**—(a) Several ratings complained that false hopes and assurances regarding pay, promotion, prospects of a career in the Navy and of postwar jobs besides good food, accommodation and treatment were held out to them by the recruiting authorities at the time of enrolment. These hopes were subsequently falsified by facts or proved impossible of fulfilment in the Service.

(b) Other ratings particularly the high caste Hindus or those recruited for skilled work complained that they were misled by not being informed that they would be required to perform certain disagreeable duties such as cleaning ship, lavatories or acting as mess messengers. (199)

On this subject the evidence of the ratings, both oral and written, discloses a deep and real grievance as well as a keen sense of disappointment; confirmation of this evidence is available from recruiting pamphlets and other official documents and also from the *statements made by officers* both in official reports and in the public Enquiry; they all seem to agree that misleading promises and hopes were held out by Government pamphlets and propaganda on the future prospects of employment or resettlement outside the Navy. (205-209, 211-213)

The official reports of the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy and the Flag Officer Bombay also support this view (203, 204)

Many recruits were told glowing tales of life in the Navy and to them the Service life was consequently a shock. (210)

25. **Recruiting Posters, Pamphlets and Booklets.** (216)

(i) **Posters.**—The Commission have examined these posters covering the period from 1942 to 1945 and are of the opinion that these posters tend to represent to the recruits that the Navy offers a permanent career, a happy life, good and ample food and clothing and liberal pay *plus many allowances*. (217)

(ii) **Pamphlets.**—Analysis shows that they tend to make misleading suggestion that the recruit will have a permanent job in the Navy, prospects of a quick promotion, good food and sympathetic and helpful officers. (218, 219)

(ii) *Booklets*.—The Commission have examined the booklets entitled "The Navy and its Job" and "Indian Navy" and they consider that these have been responsible for creating the following misunderstandings by implication or direct statement:—

(a) "R.I.N. is moulded on R.N." The ratings therefore felt justified in their demand of pay and amenities approximating to that of R. N. (220)

(b) Incorrect idea of the duties of various branches in that "cleaning ship is omitted from the list enumerating such duties. (221)

(c) Ambiguous wording of certain conditions of service conveyed an impression that though enrolment was for 5 or 10 years the recruit could stay on with good prospects of promotion and qualify for pension. (222)

(d) Overstatement of prospects of advancement to higher rates and even promotion to Warrant Rank in Communication Branch. (223)

(e) The posters and pictorial pamphlets have painted even more misleading pictures. The net result has been that the ratings become disappointed and aggrieved when the promised promotions did not come their way. (224, 225)

**26. Complaints about misrepresentation.**—The Commission have examined morale reports received in Naval Headquarters (India) in 1945 and a number of other reports from Commanding Officers of ships issued from time to time and they all show that regular misrepresentation and recruitment under false pretences were frequent during the last few years. (227)

This is also supported by the evidence of Commodore Jefford and Colonel Noon. (228, 229)

These complaints were at times so serious and general that they resulted in mutinies and other breaches of discipline on several occasions in H.M.I.S. "SIVAJI" and other naval establishments. In "SIVAJI" the artificers refused to do "CLEANSHIP" duties and also complained against pay and promotion. Subsequent enquiry proved that these ratings had been misinformed about the duties and misled by exaggerated statements at the time of enrolment. (280)

**27. Further enquiries about complaints.**—Discontent amongst ratings in the M.T.E. in Bombay was investigated on two occasions—4th January 1944 and 10th April 1944—and invariably the ratings complained of misrepresentation by the recruiting staff. (231, 282)

On 13th March 1946, a Committee was appointed to enquire into the allegation made by the ratings. The findings of the Committee were that through a desire to obtain numbers the recruiting staff did make unwarranted promises and misrepresented conditions of Service. (234)

Similar views were expressed by Commander Coverdale-Smith R.I.N. when he reported some acts of indiscipline in "SIVAJI" on 28th April 1945. (285)

Recommendations of the Flag Officer Bombay in his report to the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy, on 28th April 1945, lay stress on the harm done by the well meaning misrepresentation of Recruiting Officers. (286)

The Flag Officer Bombay formed his opinion on the basis of the report of a Committee appointed in March 1945, to examine the question. In order to help this Committee to arrive at a proper conclusion a party of recruiting officers had been invited to "SIVAJI". (287, 288)

It was ascertained that the Recruiting Officers themselves had mistaken notions of conditions of service. They admitted they had been holding out generous promises of quick promotion but they had based their assumptions on the pamphlets supplied to them which they admitted stressed the bright side of

the picture; and in the absence of exact information they were themselves inclined to guess always on the bright side. (241, 247)

It was also stated that if true conditions of service were known no recruit would have joined the technical branches of Royal Indian Navy as prospects of pay and promotion were much better in the Army and the Royal Indian Air Force. (242)

A Committee was appointed by Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy in May 1945 to investigate the causes of discontent and indiscipline among artificers in "SIVAJI" and also report on matters like recruitment, rations, messing, conditions of service. Their conclusions are on the same lines as the findings detailed above. (247-252)

There was a progressive decline of morale during the second half of 1945 and the beginning of 1946. Such a decline is to be expected in any service when a war is over but in the case of the R.I.N. there was amongst other reasons the grievance over recruiting promises. The demobilisation of large numbers of men and officers after the war coupled with the failure of resettlement schemes to provide them with jobs which they have been led to expect appeared to have added to the feeling of disappointment and frustration due to unfulfilled promises about pay prospects and conditions of service in the R.I.N.

#### CHAPTER VII.—FOOD—A SOURCE OF SERIOUS DISCONTENT

28. There is an overwhelming mass of evidence to show that the quality of food served to the ratings in the R.I.N. was one of the long standing grievances and a major cause of discontent responsible for the mutiny (256, 257)

29. Complaints regarding food were common and recurring since early 1942. (264-267)

30. The main factors responsible for unsatisfactory quality of food served to the ratings were:—

- (a) Poor quality of rations, particularly atta, rice, meat, potatoes, vegetables, dal.
- (b) Unsatisfactory supply of condiments.
- (c) Bad cooking.
- (d) Lack of variety. (259, 260)

31. (a) The following were in the main the defects of the various items of rations:—

(i) *Atta*.—Estimated storage life was short and thus unfit for issue to ships where 3 months rations had to be carried. Tests revealed that the atta complained against was "old, musty and slightly weevily". Chapattis prepared with it tasted bitter. Frequently it was coarse and needed mixing with flour up to 50 per cent to make chapattis which though palatable caused indigestion. (290, 292, 293, 345)

(ii) *Rice*.—Contained unusually large percentage of stones, grit and other foreign matter. The parboiled variety which was often supplied had offensive smell and taste after cooking. (290, 297, 298, 304, 347)

(iii) *Meat*.—Carcasses supplied by R.I.A.S.C. were lean, and stringy and contained a large proportion of bone. (269, 345)

(iv) *Potatoes*.—Small and a fair proportion pulpy.

(v) *Vegetables*.—Little variety, nothing but cabbage, brinjal and pumpkin—generally received in poor condition in R.I.A.S.C. owing to bad packing. (269, 321, 345),

(vi) *Dal*.—Old and broken up into small fragments besides contained admixture of husk and small stones. (269)

(b) *Condiments*.—Quality and composition of condiment powder proved to be very unsatisfactory and unsuitable for making good curries (342)

Sanction to purchase of fresh condiments by local naval authorities was therefore accorded by the War Department towards the end of 1945 (343)

(c) *Cooking*—(i) Bad cookery was due to the recruitment of men with no knowledge of cooking and of those unsuitable for training in cookery. Cookery School turned out men with insufficient training with the result they proved incompetent in the galley and produced unsatisfactory preparations which gave rise to complaints and discontent. (361, 365, 367)

(ii) Bad cooking was not entirely due to the incompetence of cooks. They were also handicapped by their "inferior status". It was customary to class them with topasses. A different classification as "Tradesmen" would have improved matters. (356)

(iii) For want of proper programme of work according to menu and available staff, there was a tendency to begin work too soon. Rice cooked as much as five hours before consumption. Chapatis cooked hours before they were required became cold, rough and unpalatable at the time of eating (354)

**32 System of procuring supplies.**—(a) The R.I.N. obtained its supply of rations from contractors up to March 1942. The system worked satisfactorily, complaints were few and when they did occur they were remedied immediately under a threat of termination of contract. But after 1941 supplies of food became hard to obtain and contract system failed in forward areas.

The supplies were therefore centralised and were entrusted to R.I.A.S.C. The R.I.N. began to get its supplies in bulk from R.I.A.S.C. with effect from the 1st April 1943 (261, 363, 365)

Base Victualling Officers were appointed in the ports to demand and receive supplies in bulk from R.I.A.S.C. and to arrange distribution to the ships. (268)

(b) The success for working of this system depended upon the:—

(i) Availability of supplies.

(ii) Degree of care and vigilance exercised by officers of R.I.A.S.C. at the time of receipt of consignments in the depot and by the R.I.N. Base Victualling Officers when they obtained their quota. (268)

(iii) Efficiency of examining officers of the Directorate of Food Inspection who were appointed in various areas to test the quality of representative samples and accordingly accept or reject consignments and later of Supply Organization of Provincial Governments to whom this responsibility was delegated. (262)

**33 Actual Working of the System.**—In practice the system failed to operate successfully. Main reasons for failure were—

(a) As the war progressed the food situation in the country became serious and it became difficult to obtain good supplies.

(b) The Directorate of Food Inspection of the Central Government did not exercise sufficient care to enforce strict supervision. Later as the Japanese occupation of Burma cut off an important source of supplies and the supplies within the country dwindled, the responsibility for inspection of samples and accepting or rejecting supplies was entrusted to the Provincial Governments. This system did not prove a success; owing to lack of recognised standards and grading of rice in the provinces consignments with high percentage of impurities were accepted and distributed. The inspecting machinery of the Provincial Governments failed to discharge their duty in conscientious spirit. (262, 302)

(c) The officers of the R.I.A.S.C. did not exercise sufficient care and caution in accepting the supplies. They were either negligent or inefficient.

(d) The R.I.N. officers as a rule failed at the time of drawing to scrutinise the provisions supplied by R.I.A.S.C. for their quality, and accepted bad stuff for distribution to ships and shore establishments. Through their negligence the defects in quality of rations obtained undetected or were not brought to the notice of Officer-in-Charge Supplies who was thus precluded from pursuing the matter at a higher level. (263)

**34. Responsibility.**—Our conclusions on a retrospect of the entire material placed before us are—

(1) that generally speaking the atta and rice supplied to the R.I.N. ratings was of a very low quality and the food prepared with it was the source of grave discontent;

(2) that cooking was also generally speaking bad and spoiled the taste of the food;

(3) that the food supplied was monotonous and there was in addition a lack of variety which was a further reason for its not being relished;

(4) that the economic conditions during war worsened the food situation and made it difficult to obtain good supplies;

(5) that the necessity for securing increasingly large quantities of provisions for the expanding fighting forces resulted in bad quality of rice, atta and other provisions being accepted;

(6) that the officers and personnel charged with the duty of procurement were negligent and failed to exercise care and caution in accepting the supplies. The officers in the R.I.A.S.C. share this blame along with the Provincial Governments and the contractors from whom supplies were received;

(7) that the inspecting machinery created during the war does not appear to have discharged their duty in a conscientious spirit;

(8) that the R.I.N. officers in general, subject to occasional exceptions, woefully failed to scrutinise the provisions supplied by the R.I.A.S.C. for their quality and accepted bad stuff and passed it on to the ships and shore establishments in reckless disregard of the discontent likely to be aroused by bad food among the ratings;

(9) that the bad cooking was due to the recruitment of men with no knowledge of cooking and unsuitable for training in cookery. The training schools in the R.I.N. gave insufficient training and turned out men who were in fact incompetent to undertake such an important duty. The result was poor chapatis, bad rice and worse curry;

(10) that the indifference of the officers led to delays in the complaints about food reaching the Naval Headquarters;

(11) that the Naval Headquarters did take interest in the question and tried to improve the situation, but they were checkmated by want of co-operation and sympathy from the connected departments, which dealt with the question of food for the fighting forces in general;

(12) that there was overcrowding of men in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR" and the demobilisation centres at a time when they had not much work to do, and this led to the grievance about food being more keenly felt than before;

(13) that the bad quality of food was a long-standing grievance and the ratings felt that their complaints remained unheeded and this led to a sense of frustration among them which made them reckless of consequences.

#### CHAPTER VIII.—SOME ASPECTS OF THE R.I.N. ORGANISATION AND ITS DEFECTS

**35. Scope of the chapter.**—This chapter will deal with defects in the internal economy in the R.I.N. including Divisional Duties, Handling and managing of men, and Administration from N.H.Q. downwards and will assess how far they are responsible for the mutiny.

36. **The efficiency** of a Service and more so of a young and expanding service like the R.I.N. would depend primarily upon three factors:—

(a) The quality of the raw material *i.e.*, both officers and ratings recruited for the Service, and their

(b) thorough and efficient training which in its turn would require good senior officers and petty officers, not only to impart technical training but what is more fundamental, to serve as models for purpose of inculcating discipline, pride of service, team work and in the case of officers the art of "man-management". (376)

(c) *Efficiency of general administration*.—From N.H.Q. in its various directorates in the H.Q.s at Delhi to the C.O.s. of ships and establishments Executive Officers, Divisional Officers, P.O.s. and ratings. (377)

37. The initial defects in the quality of officers and ratings recruited for the service can be summarised as follows:—

(i) (a) Officers belonged to as many as 19 different countries or nationalities and some of them came from countries known for strong colour prejudice. The result of this heterogenous diversity was that most officers were lacking in interest or knowledge of India in particular of the Indian ratings and their social and religious customs.

The political implication of the policy of recruiting officers from countries all over the world was also unfortunate as it was considered to be counter to Indianization which both Indian officers and ratings aspired for. This also became a source of discontent and affected the morale of the Service. (387)

(b) Most of the officer recruits were young and inexperienced, were handicapped by lack of background and ignorance of the sea and naval life and traditions. (390)

Many officers joined with the sole object of getting a well-paid job, pride of ship or service was not in their make-up. (428)

Then there were quite a few whose habitual callousness towards men can be attributed only to their fundamental lack of humanity and elementary considerations for the well being of men for which no special training should be necessary. (412)

(ii) Ratings representing all communities and all parts of India. Majority of them were educated young boys; education was a mixed blessing—on credit side it made for technical proficiency and on debit side the defects of mere academic learning especially aversion to unpleasant manual work, discipline and obedience. (396, 397, 399). This also made the job of managing these men more difficult. (398).

38. **Training**.—Adequate attention to training in Division duties was not given for which the Naval H.Q. are responsible. The pre-war senior regular officers and Petty Officers did not effectively supervise their juniors. Of course allowance must be made for the fact that with the expansion of the Service most regular officers of necessity gravitated to N.H.Q. and other offices and very few were left to look after the training of a large number of new entry officers and ratings in ships and establishments. (385, 383, 393)

The time factor also operated against efficient and thorough training. The exigencies of war and the urgent demands of quick development of technical fighting efficiency limited the time and opportunities for developing initiative and leadership in the trainees. (392)

39. **General Administration**—(a) *The Divisional System*.—Under this system the ship's company is divided into divisions, each division being under a Divisional Officer responsible to the head of his Department for the conduct and welfare of his Division. (412)

The Divisional Officer is personally responsible to closely watch the interests of his ratings, attend to their requests and grievances and ensure their general well-being. Other details of his duties are given in the Admiral's booklet compiled for the guidance of officers. (412, 415)

The system is essentially sound but it requires for its success good officers and P.Os. The quality of these deteriorated as the Service expanded. (427-429)

Partly it was due to short and inadequate training in the Divisional duties. (385). The other factor which contributed to the failure was lack of sympathy on the part of officers both British and Indian towards the ratings. The attitude of some officers particularly European was arrogant and their treatment inhuman and brutal. (380, 411)

In general there was little contact between officers and men. (420). They lived in completely different worlds. (422)

Generally European officers and even some Indian officers did not know Urdu and showed little interest in learning it; so that they could hardly talk to their men.

The type of educated rating recruited in the R.I.N. needed a particularly tactful handling. Given a sympathetic guidance he could have been made to imbibe the ideas of dignity of labour and cheerfully put up with routine duties of "cleanship", washing decks and mess messenger, which have been the cause of considerable discontent and alleged grievances that led to mutiny. (398, 400, 405, 406)

(b) *Lack of solidarity or harmonious co-operation between officers.*—Lack of understanding between European and Indian officers. Want of harmony among the officers—seriously affected the morale and efficiency of training. (381)

The existence of three castes of officers in the Service—Regular, Naval Reservist and Volunteer Reservist and their mutual recriminations. (391)

(c) *Deplorable Results of failure of Divisional System.*—These were particularly evident in the handling of ratings' complaints.

In the ships and establishments through the failure of Divisional System and also owing to general unsympathetic attitude of most officers including the Captains of ships, the complaints of ratings were not properly attended; they were either suppressed at the source or eventually dismissed without redress. Majority of ratings were afraid to air their complaints. This bottling up of grievances had serious consequences. The result was a growing sense of frustration in the minds of ratings. (441, 442-49)

(d) *Defects in N.H.Q. Organisation* are reflected in:—

(i) The failure of N.H.Q. to ensure adequate training of new officers in Divisional Duties and their effective supervision and guidance by senior regular officers.

(ii) Their failure to appreciate the lack of harmony between Indian and European officers and tendency to mutual recrimination between three categories of officers, Regular, Naval Reservist and Volunteer Reservist.

(iii) Defects in organisation and the conduct of day to day business in Delhi and R.I.N. Office Bombay.

(iv) Rigid adherence to the R.N. pattern. To some extent Indian Navy needs to modify its methods and conditions to suit the genius and culture of this country. (401)

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 CHAPTER IX—ILL-TREATMENT OF RATINGS AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION—TWO MAJOR CAUSES OF DISCONTENT

10. There is considerable evidence to establish that the R.I.N. ratings were often subjected to harsh and at times even inhuman treatment by quite a number of officers, most of whom were European. (453, 511, 512)

41. This harsh treatment was not the result of a desire to enforce strict discipline or administer impartial justice. This was essentially due to "colour bar" against Indians or a sense of superiority-complex and a racial arrogance from which a number of European officers suffered. (454)

42. Indian ratings felt a deep sense of resentment at the discriminatory treatment meted out to them as contrasted with R.N. ratings or B.O.Rs. They could not explain it except on grounds of "racial discrimination" as their experience in various theatres of war had been that neither in capacity nor in actual performance they were in any way inferior to British ratings. (454, 455). Treatment of British sailors was indulgent. At times their acts of indiscipline were ignored while no indulgence was shown to the Indian ratings (455).

43. Racial discrimination operated not only as between British officers and Indian ratings but also between British officers and Indian officers in the Service. Its manifestations were—

(a) Undue preferments and unjust promotions of Europeans over the head of Indians.

(b) Rude and offensive manner towards Indian officers and a general attitude of slighting contempt. (458, 478)

(c) Disregard of Regulations or customary standards of conduct by British officers, (460, 461, 462), and the impression that a British officer could get away with many things for which an Indian would be punished (477-479)

(d) Open avowal of contempt for Indian by certain British officers in the messes—This would percolate to the lower deck and create tension between men and British officers. (471)

(e) Allocation of important jobs to Europeans. (472)

(f) Discrimination in regard not only to promotion and appointment but even in such minor matters as allotment of cabins or playing of Indian music on the Radio in messes. (476)

44. The effect of this racial discrimination was that relations between Indian and British officers were soured and unhealthy barriers were created which prevented the growth of a sense of solidarity and common loyalty so necessary in the Service. (458, 478)

This led to the lowering of the morale of the Service in general

45. In relation to the ratings the racial factor was responsible for—

(a) Their ill-treatment at the hands of European officers whose example was also imitated by a few Indian officers under the erroneous notion that the harsh treatment was a proof of power of command. There was unnecessary use of foul language, excessive shouting and bullying. (464, 469)

At times disproportionately severe punishments for minor offences were awarded. Punishment of number of ratings with stoppage of liberty for a loss of a pair of shoes belonging to a steward is a case in point. (513)

(b) Preferential treatment of Royal Navy ratings at the expense of R.I.N. ratings—

(i) The R.N. ratings working in the R.I.N. were dealt with great leniency. Even their misconduct went unpunished. (485)

(ii) Promotions from R.N. lower deck to R.I.N. commissioned ranks were made in disregard of the superior merits of the material available in R.I.N. lower deck. (486)

(iii) Humiliating discrimination against R.I.N. ratings in Trincomalee, Singapore and Durban. (487)

46. The result of our investigations may now be summarised as follows:—

(1) It is established that the ratings were often subjected to harsh and at times inhuman treatment by quite a number of officers in the R.I.N., most of whom were Europeans.

(2) This was due to the sense of superiority complex and racial arrogance from which a number of European Officers suffered. Their example was imitated by a few Indian Officers under the wrong notion that tough treatment of the ratings is proof of the possession of a power of command.

(3) The breakdown of the divisional system and the feeling of frustration produced in the mind of the officers and their failure adequately, if at all, to deal with their legitimate grievances aggravated the discontent.

(4) The racial factor also contributed to bring about disharmony and friction between European and Indian Officers and this led to the lowering of the morale in the Service in general.

(5) Instances of misconduct by acts of omission and commission on the part of the officers have been sufficiently numerous to make the ratings believe that the administration would not take cognizance of their grievances or take steps to remedy them.

(6) The ratings as a class felt that there was colour bar and racial discrimination in the whole Service, and that they consequently received treatment which in many respects compared unfavourably with that which the R.N. ratings had. (514)

#### CHAPTER X.—OTHER GRIEVANCES WHICH ALSO CAUSED DISCONTENT

47. **Pay.**—There has been a growing feeling of discontent on the question of pay in the R.I.N. The grievances existed even two to three years before the mutiny. The pay of all ratings was increased from time to time during the war and in 1944 there was a general upward revision for the purpose of attracting more recruits. (521, 524)

The position, however, remained unsatisfactory even after the end of the war. There was a general demand for higher pay. Later the disparity between the pay of R.I.N. and R.N. ratings was keenly felt and consequently the majority of ratings have demanded the same rates of pay as in R.N. or Burma or Ceylon Navies, on the principle of "equal pay for equal work". The R.I.N. ratings have failed to appreciate the economic argument that owing to prevalence of different economic conditions and standards of living in the U.K. and India, equality of pay is not possible. The demand is more a matter of prestige and emotion than for mere money. (515, 516)

The Commission, however, feels that the ratings are not so keen on equality with R.N. as with the Burma and Ceylon Navies. There is also the pressing demand for such revision of pay as would reduce what is at present the glaring disparity between the pay of higher ranks and lower rates in the Service. (525)

48. **Family Allowances.**—The ratings in the R.I.N. do not get marriage allowance as in the R.N. or married quarters for families as in the Indian Army. The Commission feels that the grievance is worthy of consideration, and that some form of family allowance separate from basic pay or in lieu of married quarters in shore establishment may be provided.

**49. Family welfare.**—Under the existing regulations families of R.I.N. ratings are eligible for the same medical treatment as Indian other ranks. Consequently only such families as are in occupation of Government accommodation are entitled to medical attendance at their quarters. This in practice is a hardship as very few of them have Government accommodation. An amendment of these regulations would help to redress this minor grievance. (527)

**50. R.I.N. Benevolent Association.**—There are only 2 minor complaints but otherwise no real grievance. The Commission consider that the R.I.N.B.A. is doing excellent work among the families of ratings. (528)

**51. Pensions—Service, Disability and Family.**—N.H.Q. have been, for a long time, aware of the inadequacy of pensions. Early in 1944 the case for the revision of all the three kinds of pensions was submitted to the Government and in December 1944 approval was accorded to increased disability and family pensions but decision on service pension was deferred to postwar period. (530)

Existing scale of pensions in R.I.N. is meagre and has caused particular discontent among the C.P.Os. and P.Os. whose pay is double that of the Army Havildar but pension just the same. (531-538)

**52. Rail Travel.**—It has been felt both by ratings and officers that C.P.Os and P.Os. should be allowed second class railway travel instead of the third class allowed to them until the end of 1935. N.H.Q. realized that the demand was just and made a strong case to the Government that C.P.Os. and P.Os. should have same travelling facilities as V.C.Os. in the Army. Since however it had been accepted that C.P.Os. and P.Os. ranked as equivalent to Havildar Majors and Havildars respectively, and it appeared that the former categories could not be made eligible for second class travel without also authorizing it for the latter, Military Finance Department did not agree to the proposal. Later inter class travel was sanctioned for C.P.Os. and P.Os. and Leading Hands. (534-537)

**53. Mine Sweeping Allowance.**—In October 1945 the Admiralty sanctioned Mine Sweeping Allowance for R.N. ratings employed on mine sweeping operations. R.I.N. ratings have complained that no such allowance was given to them for similar work. N.H.Q. agree and are pressing for Government sanction. (538, 589)

**54. Canteen.**—There are two reasons behind the demand for use of NAAFI stores:—

(i) It would be an act of racial discrimination not to allow it.

(ii) NAAFI have a better selection of goods than R.I.N. canteens. (540)

As regards (i) there is no justification for it in India as the Indian Canteen Stores Department provides canteens for the use of the personnel of the Armed Forces in India and NAAFI has been established by Admiralty for the exclusive use of Royal Navy. In foreign countries it would be a hardship if R.I.N. ratings were not allowed the use of NAAFI as there are no canteens provided by the Indian Canteen Stores Department. Considerable evidence suggests that in such cases exclusion of R.I.N. ratings from NAAFI canteens has been keenly felt as according to them it has been done on racial grounds. There have been frequent cases of maltreatment. (541)

**55. Indianization of Commissioned and Warrant ranks in the R.I.N.**—(i) Soon after the war ended it was announced that 66 permanent commissions would be offered to Indian officers and 40 to British officers and that selection would be made through a selection board. A reserve officer was to be eligible for commission only if he had one year's total service and 6 months' sea service. The announcement was unfortunate and created considerable misunderstanding in the Service; the number (66) was too small; the condition of sea service for eligibility was a hardship as many young officers had not held sea appointments

for no fault of theirs; the selection board was suspect and popularly believed to be a device to throw out the majority of Indian candidates as unsuitable. (546-550)

(ii) The decision to get 200 officers on loan from R.N. came in for a great deal of adverse criticism and caused resentment among reserve officers. It was construed as a step to counter or delay Indianization of the Service. (551-554)

(iii) There has been considerable heartburning on the question of promotion from lower deck to commissioned rank. Prior to 1942 no scheme existed for any such promotion. A scheme was tried in August 1942 but did not prove a success. Another was introduced in 1944 but resulted in 18 commissions only. It is therefore obvious that the R.I.N. has lagged behind other countries and the Indian Army in matter of promoting men from lower deck to commissioned ranks. The Commission therefore feels that the grievance is genuine and has been a source of considerable discontent. (561-564)

(iv) Although the number of R.I.N. warrant officers rose steadily during the war there has been a general complaint that warrant officers have been obtained by secondment from Royal Navy at the expense of the number of promotions available to Indian ratings. (565)

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#### CHAPTER XI.—DEMOBILIZATION—HOW IT ADDED TO DISCONTENT

56. It is the duty of administration to see that men on release from Service should return to their homes as contented and satisfied men.

57. The process of demobilization in the R.I.N. not only failed to achieve this end but even helped to cause bitterness and discontent in the minds of the ratings. (566)

58. This is because the planning of demobilization process was haphazard and the officers whose duty it was to carry it out failed to do it in an efficient and conscientious manner. (592A)

59. The conditions in DEMOBILIZATION CENTRES were trying.

(i) *H.M.I.S. "KAKAURI"*.—The ratings complained of congestion, bad quarters, bad food, hard manual labour and long period of waiting which at times extended to 6-7 weeks instead of 12 days laid down in Release Regulations. (567, 568, 573)

These complaints were investigated by N.H.Q. and found correct. Admiral Godfrey said that the effect of demobilisation was that it produced a feeling of confusion and controversy and led to dissatisfaction in the service. (575)

(ii) *Port Barracks*.—The Release Centre for H.O. ratings. Same defects as above. In addition, there were many complaints regarding hasty discharge. A number of H.O. ratings discharged without gratuity or railway fare. No release leave was given. Kit issued whilst in Naval service had to be returned and shortages, if any, had to be paid for in cash or deductions from pay. Nullies (continuous discharge certificates) were not returned. They had been probably lost in the Drafting Office, where the ratings had deposited them on enrolment.

Complaints of the ratings about discrepancy in their accounts and requests connected with increments on account of promotions earned through length of the Naval service or specific examinations passed were not properly attended to. There was an unseemly hurry to get rid of the largest possible numbers daily. (571, 576, 578-582)

(iii) *H.M.I.S. "CHEETAH"*.—The second demobilization centre for short service ratings.

Considerable delay occurred in settling the accounts of ratings before discharge as service documents held in Castle Barracks were not sent expeditiously. (598)

60. There is ample evidence to show that the atmosphere in the release centres was vitiated and led to considerable bitterness and resentment in the ratings being released from service. One of the major causes of this resentment was the grievance about the return of kit on demobilization and recovery for missing articles by deductions from pay. (601-604)

61. This bitterness outside had repercussions within the Service.

62. Besides the policy of demobilization and the procedure adopted to work it led to discontent among ratings in the service in the following manner:—

(a) Demobilization started in accordance with the "age and service" groups system. After the fixation of the limit of peacetime Navy provisionally at the lower limit of 11,000 this system had to be modified to enable R.I.N. to retain certain number of higher rates capable of manning the lower limit. It was also decided to eliminate by selection the unsuitable and incompetent types. Competent senior ratings whom the R.I.N. would retain were in a hurry to get discharge because they thought their prospect outside the Service were better than in it. The incompetent ratings whom R.I.N. wanted to throw out desired to stay on as long as possible. The result was that both these groups were discontented.

(b) The third class of the ratings to harbour discontent consisted of ratings who had applied for discharge on compassionate grounds and had claimed priority for release. Some delay occurred before their cases could be examined by N.H.Q. and action taken. The delay meant discontent. (593-596)

63. The cumulative result of variety of these reasons was that discontent grew within the Service between the months of November 1945, and February 1946 and became one of the most important causes of the Mutiny of February 1946.

#### CHAPTER XII.—INEFFECTIVE RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES— FURTHER SOURCE OF DISCONTENT

64. The average rating firmly believed that he was going to be provided with a postwar job by the Government. The Naval recruiting advertisements and the Government press notes about schemes of resettlement of ex-service-men were responsible for creating this belief. (606, 615)

65. The Resettlement Schemes of Labour Department were comprehensive and admirable on paper and made provisions for pre-release training, vocational training, trade-testing and organisation for contacting employer through Employment Exchanges and also settlement on land through the land-colonization schemes of Provincial Governments. In practice the schemes failed to provide employment except for a small fraction of demobilized personnel. For the majority resettlement assistance did not go beyond registration in Labour Exchanges. Pre-release training was equally ineffective. (609-611, 621)

N.H.Q. off and on drew attention to the fact that nothing was being done in the question of resettlement but these representations did not achieve much result. (612)

66. The result was disappointment and disillusionment for a large body of demobilized personnel. This reacted adversely on the ratings still in service or those about to be demobilized. Prospects of uncertain future and fear of economic insecurity led to deterioration of morale, progressive loss of interest in the Service and eventually discontent and disaffection that became a potent cause of the Mutiny. (616, 620, 622)

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 CHAPTER XIII.—POLITICS AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE AS A  
 CONTRIBUTORY CAUSE OF THE MUTINY

67. The important issues for consideration in this context are—

1. Was the mutiny organized by an outside agency?
2. Was the mutiny pre-planned and pre-meditated?
3. To what extent Politics and political influence can be said to be responsible for the mutiny? (624)

The third issue is the main issue.

68. Was the mutiny organised by an outside agency?

(a) *Morale Reports*—

In the summary of quarterly morale reports for May, June and July 1945 there is no mention of any subversive political influence at work. Morale reports of 44 ships and establishments for the period ending 30th September 1945 state that R.I.N. ratings and officers were either indifferent to politics or interested in an healthy way. Morale reports relating to "TALWAR"—no reference to politics. Similar is the impression of morale reports from other ships.

Reports for the quarter ending 31st December 45—morale in general satisfactory; ratings politically conscious; keenly aware of relative lack of amenities for themselves and their families as compared to those provided in foreign Navies; but otherwise their loyalty to the Service unquestioned; some ratings influenced by I.N.A. propaganda and sympathetic to I.N.A. (625, 626)

The report of Colonel Haq Nawaz based on his visits to ships and establishments in Bombay and Karachi between December 1945 and February 1946:—No evidence of undue interest taken by ranks in politics; political views divided but ratings from different communities get on very well; sympathy to I.N.A. (628)

Similar reports based on visit to "TALWAR" and "KAKAURI" in December 1945:—All ratings and officers sympathetic to independence movement in the country; Muslim ratings keenly interested in Pakistan; Hindu ratings pro-Congress; opinion about I.N.A. divided but majority in favour of trials being abandoned. (629)

(b) The Commission's conclusion after a very deep consideration is that the mutiny was not organised by outside agency. Those who say it was, base their conclusion on surmise and the evidence furnished by papers recovered from the locker of L/Tel B. C. Dutt. (631)

Evidence of Dutt's diary and other papers—Dutt himself a disappointed man, his record of service excellent and his financial condition bad. (632) His diary which covers a period of one month only shows that he was in touch with some outside subversive organisation. One of his papers sets out the necessity of a revolution in the Forces. The diary shows that ratings did not fully trust him. Though described by himself as an idealist some of his friends termed him a traitor. The conclusion is that Dutt could not have carried great influence with the ratings. (633, 634)

Even witness Ahmad Brohi who supported the theory of Naval Office Bombay that the Mutiny was due to political influence repudiates the suggestion that the mutiny was organized by an outside agency. (635)

Evidence of Mrs. Nair—Mutiny purely an internal affair. (636)

69. Was the mutiny pre-planned and pre-meditated?

Opinion of Lt.-Col. Rudra—his evidence is important and in his opinion the mutiny was entirely spontaneous. (637)

There is a great deal of evidence both oral and circumstantial to support this view.

According to Lt. Meredith the immediate cause of the mutiny in "TALWAR" was alleged insulting language of Commander King. (638)

According to Lieuts. Kholi and Nanda, bad food served on the 17th February caused the trouble. (639)

The course of events and origin of mutiny disproves the suggestion that it was pre-planned and pre-meditated.

Besides no clue is available as to who planned it. Congress and League flags improvised for the occasion and not imported as suggested to prove pre-planning. (640)

An anonymous letter addressed to the C-in-C has been produced by Flag Officer Bombay in support of the theory that the mutiny had been previously planned. In the Commission's opinion this letter does not bear any political complexion. It refers only to discontent among persons awaiting demobilization and their prospects of resettlement. No reliable inference possible from this undated unsigned document. (641)

Statement of Abinad Brohi lends some support to the theory that the mutiny was pre-planned but the bona fides of this witness are questionable. His evidence is full of prevarications. Witness not a straightforward man, very anxious to prove his innocence. (642)

**70. To what extent politics and political influence can be said to be responsible for the mutiny?**

The third and really important issue is the question of responsibility of political influence for the mutiny. Rear Admiral Rattray in his statement said that the causes of the mutiny are to be found in politics and political influence. The Commission does not agree with this view. (628). That the mutiny did assume a political complexion is borne out by anti-British slogans, hoisting of Congress and League flags, mutineers contact with Mrs. Asaf Ali and other political leaders. (643)

Factors which contributed to the spread of subversive propaganda among the ratings and gave the mutiny a political complexion:—majority of ratings politically conscious, the ratings contact with I.N.A. and Azad Hind literature in Singapore, Malaya and Burma, free access to political meetings, inflammatory articles in the Press, discussion of I.N.A. trials, R.A.F. and R.I.A.F. "strikes", Commander King incident which accentuated existing racial feelings (644), exploitation of the existing discontent and unrest in the Service by some individuals in the Service holding anti-British views. (644, 645) But the mutiny retained its original character and never assumed the shape of a political revolt. (646)

The mutiny originated in grievances and politics helped. (647)

Its background was sudden expansion of the Service, failure of leadership or man-management by officers, C.P.Os and P.Os; sudden cessation of hostilities; world-wide unrest; racial discrimination; grievances about food, pay etc.; defects in the organization. Politics and political influence helped this background and had great effect in unsettling men's loyalty. (648, 649)

The Commission consider that—

(a) the mutiny was not organised by an outside agency.

(b) the mutiny was not preplanned.

(c) Politics and political influence had a very great effect in unsettling men's loyalty and in preparing the ground for the mutiny and in the prolongation and spread of this mutiny after it had started. (649).

## CHAPTER XIV.—DEFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION—ITS BEARING ON THE MUTINY

71. The scope of the chapter is to consider:—

- (i) Deficiencies in the administration by N.H.Q. in Delhi,
- (ii) Inefficiency in R.I.N. Office, Bombay. (650).

72. With regard to N.H.Q. the following allegations have been made by a number of witnesses.—

(a) Complete lack of confidence throughout the Service in N.H.Q. and R.I.N. Office Bombay and a prevalent notion that N.H.Q. were out of touch with ships and shore establishments;

- (b) Numerous cases of delay in important matters affecting ratings;
- (c) Favouritism in matter of allocating staff appointments and promotions; (652).

(d) Slavish reliance on R.N. pattern and failure to modify it to suit Indian conditions;

(e) Frequent transfers of officers resulting in failure of officers to establish close contact with men. (653); and according to the findings of Committee of Enquiry appointed by the F.O.C.R.I.N.:—

(f) Bad staff work shown in the handling of communications of vital importance from ships and establishments leading to enormous delay in disposal of urgent problems and at times unwarranted postponement of decisions (654);

(g) Bad co-ordination and failure to grasp full scope, implications or aspects of a case (655); and in regard to training the N.H.Q. have been accused of:—

(h) failure to formulate definite and sound "training" policy and provide competent "instructors";

- (i) Poor maintenance of Training Establishments;

- (j) Indiscriminate and injudicious recruitment of officers;

(k) Frequent changes of officers and lack of a sound system of appointments to enable the junior officers to get shore and sea experience. (657).

73. The Commission is not in a position to pronounce any definite opinion on the correctness or otherwise of these allegations. The evidence on the subject is inadequate and commission has not been able to examine it in detail.

74. But generally the Commission is inclined to think that the N.H.Q. cannot be absolved from responsibility for failure of administration and recommends that the suggested association of Civil Service officers with the N.H.Q. administration as in British Admiralty is a proposal worthy of consideration.

75. Similar complaints have been made against the working of R.I.N. Office, Bombay, its inefficiency is particularly apparent in handling of situation in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR". The office has also been accused of an anti-Indian bias. (660).

76. The Commission have recommended that the whole Organization of N.H.Q. and also the difficulties which appeared to exist in the transaction of business between it and War and Military Finance Departments, should be looked into (659 and 662).

## CHAPTER XV.—IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF MUTINY IN H.M.I.S. "TALWAR".

77. Immediate causes of mutiny in H.M.I.S. "TALWAR" were:—

- (1) The Commander King Incident,
- (2) Food, and
- (3) Mishandling of the situation in its earlier stages.

78. **Commander King Incident.**—(a) Situation in TALWAR when Commander King took over command on the 21st January 1946 was already bad, there was discontent and unrest within the service, the establishment was overcrowded beyond its capacity, besides understaffed with officers; appointment of the new Commanding Officer in place of Lieut.-Commander Cole the outgoing popular C.O., was unwelcome. (664).

(b) Against this background a series of unfortunate incidents occurred:—

(i) Two ratings punished in an unfair manner without proper inquiry. (665).

(ii) Arrest of Ldg. Tel. B. C. Dutt on 2nd February 1946 for writing political slogans on 1st February 1946.

(iii) Slogan "Quit India" written on Commander King's car on the 6th and 7th February and the tyres deflated and finally, the incident on 8th February which created a stir in the establishment.

(c) (i) *A. M. 8th February.*—Al'eged catcalls at W.R.I.Ns. by some TALWAR ratings; Commander King heard them and entered the ratings' Barracks to find out the culprits. On not being shown proper marks of respect reprimanded the ratings in "normal naval manner" and according to the ratings called them "sons of bitches, coolies and junglies".

Result: a great stir—

(ii) *9th February.*—Formal request by 14 ratings for complaint against Commander King's language—Complaint heard by Executive Officer Lt. Commander Shaw and referred to C.O. on Sunday the 10th February with a personal and confidential letter stressing its importance in view of the ratings' very strong feelings.

(iii) Commander King did not heed the advice and deferred the hearing of complaint to Saturday (the 16th February) his normal day for hearing request-men.

(iv) On 16th Commander King saw the Requestmen and warned them *against making false complaint and in accordance with Regulations gave them 24 hours to think after which they could make the complaint in writing.* This was construed as a threat.

(v) *18th February.*—Complaint presented in writing and the mutiny started. (668).

(d) Two issues involved in this incident:—

(i) Was the abusive language used by Commander King?

(ii) His handling of the complaint and its effect on TALWAR ratings. (667).

Regarding (i) on consideration of the entire evidence, oral, written and circumstantial the Commission is inclined to believe that Ratings' version as to language used by Commander King is correct. Commander King's inability to recall actual words used in reprimanding ratings in "Normal naval manner", Lt. Comdr. Shaw's statement before the TALWAR Board of Enquiry, Lt. Nanda's admission that Commander King was given to habitual use of bad language and Lt. Kohli's evidence before the same board all show that the ratings' complaint is correct. (670).

Regarding (ii) the Commission is of opinion that Commander King's attitude in dealing with the complaint of the ratings was unwise and resulted in worsening the ugly situation when complaint was deferred for six days during which time discontent spread. His attitude at the time of hearing the complaint amounted to threat to ratings to withdraw their complaint. This caused great resentment. (672, 682).

The Commission regrets to say that Commander King did not impress them as a reliable witness. His views on alleged grievances like food etc., are not

enlightened and told he was an unfortunate choice for command of "TALWAR". (673).

79. **Food.**—Complaint against unpalatable preparation of dal on the night of 17th February and morning of 18th. Ratings did not take their meals; failure of Duty Officer to take effective steps for redress; complaints about food had been frequent during the period immediately preceding the days of Mutiny. (674, 675).

*Conclusion.*—Complaint about food genuine; but by itself it could not have caused mutiny.

80. **Mishandling of the situation.**—We consider that the following were the main faults in the handling of the situation—

(1) The Naval Authorities did not take more active steps before the mutiny.

(2) The F.O.B. did not step in over Commander King's head on hearing of the complaint about his conduct on or by the 11th February, 1946.

(3) The Duty Officers on the night of the 17th and morning of the 18th did not take more active steps over food and did not inform the Commanding Officer of the situation nor did the C.O. inform the Flag Officer, Bombay, in regard to it until 09 45 hrs on the 18th.

(4) There was indecision and inaction on the part of Commander King on the morning of the 18th February.

(5) The F.O.B. failed to appreciate the situation and waited until 1200 hrs. on the 18th before going down to TALWAR.

(6) The Commanding Officer, the Executive Officer, the other Officers, Chief and Petty Officers and the Flag Officer, Bombay, did not take early and immediate steps between 0800 and 1000 hrs to re-assert authority with firmness and at the same time take sympathetic steps to alleviate the complaints.

(7) A number of Officers, Chief and Petty Officers assumed a neutral attitude instead of bringing in their full weight on the side of Authority.

(8) The Flag Officer, Bombay, failed to isolate TALWAR and to prevent the news of the mutiny spreading.

(9) The Flag Officer, Bombay and Naval Headquarters failed to issue authoritative statements to counteract rumours.

It seems to us that but for these mistakes this great catastrophe might never have happened—a catastrophe which caused so much damage, suffering and bloodshed, which has ruined so many young lives and careers and which has left so much unhappiness and bitterness in the Service. (681).

#### CHAPTER XVI.—CONCLUSIONS

81. The Commission is keenly alive to the dangers of taking an unrealistic view of the Mutiny and trying to explain it away by *a priori* reasoning and is therefore anxious to emphasize the basic and most important cause of the Mutiny which tends to be obscured in the otherwise valuable papers regarding this Mutiny given to them for their perusal. (683, 684).

82. The basic cause of the Mutiny in the Commission's opinion is the widespread discontent among naval ratings arising primarily from a number of unredressed grievances generated by the political situation. (685). That alone can explain why ratings belonging to different provinces speaking different languages and dialects and holding different shades of opinion made a common cause and rose like one man against the Service. Discontent was universal and provided the only bond that held them together. (686).

83. This has been rightly emphasized by the TALWAR Board of Enquiry and is also borne out by the abnormal figures for desertions (Chapter I, para. 19 of Report and 5 of Summary), number of previous mutinies (Chapter II),

abnormally large number of persons wishing to be released after the war (Chapter XI, 593). (687).

84. The main causes of this discontent have been discussed in previous chapters and, to recapitulate, are summarized below:—

(1) *Recruiting Propaganda*.—Rosy pictures of prospects in the Service painted by Recruiting Officers to attract recruits. Omission to give correct information about the nature of duties in naval service—

Result: large body of discontented ratings; attempts at desertion or securing discharge by wilful negligence or disobedience of orders; adverse effect on morale. (688)

(2) *Ill-treatment of the Ratings and Racial Discrimination*.—They are, in the Commission's opinion, the primary causes which produced bitterness and discontent. Lack of contact between officers and men, officers' indifference to men's welfare, apathy towards their grievances and lack of tact in dealing with the educated type, bad treatment by C.P.Os and P.Os., unnecessary shouting, bullying and use of abusive language, unjust punishments.

*Racial Discrimination* operated in two ways:—

- (a) Denial of certain privileges open to European ratings;
- (b) Contemptuous attitude of European officers and their occasional use of abusive language or expressions like "black bastard".

Indian officers also felt the sting of this discrimination; they felt they were insulted and treated unfairly in matters of appointments and promotions. Racial bitterness is largely responsible for giving an anti-British trend to the Mutiny. (689).

(3) *Food*—Details of various causes of bad food in R.T.N. have been discussed in chapter VII. The point that may be emphasized here is that it was "strangely" cooked and did not satisfy the ratings and besides apathy of officers to food complaints was phenomenal. (690)

(4) *Other Causes of Discontent*.—In addition to grievances about pay, pensions, allowances, etc., the following deserve mention:—

(i) *Delay in disbursement of pay*.—For this, slackness and inefficiency of Pay branch has been blamed.

(ii) *Complaints regarding kit*.—Kits issued were ill-fitting and clothing-history-sheets were not properly maintained.

(iii) *Complaints about leave*.

(iv) *Complaints about Promotion*.—Allegation of favouritism and no promotion from lower deck.

(v) *Demobilization*.—Complaints of hardship and discomforts in Release Centres—Failure of Resettlement Schemes to provide promised postwar jobs

(vi) *Discontent among the P. Os and C. P. Os and Indian Officers*.—P. Os and C. P. Os aggrieved about poor travelling facilities, pensions, promotions, etc. Indian officers were bitter over racial discrimination worried about future and disappointed at the announcement that only 66 of them were to be given permanent commissions. (691)

(7) *British Officers*.—Morale Reports and evidence of some witnesses suggest that many European Officers were war-weary, home-sick or apprehensive of their future owing to political conditions in India and officers on loan from Royal Navy did not have much interest in the service

(8) *Politics*.—Causes of discontent among the ratings due to unredressed grievances and of the deterioration of morale in the service have been recapitulated in previous sections. Discontent led to disaffection against the service which was identified with the British officers who were responsible for administering it and later with the political regime in the country.

The mutiny thus came to have a political complexion which was further intensified by a number of political influences at work e.g., anti-British Propaganda in the press and the political speeches; free access to communist and other subversive literature and propaganda in the port towns; glorification of I.N.A.; discontent arising out of demobilization where service grievances got mixed up with politics. At the top of it came the "Commander King incident" in H.M.I.S. "Tulwar" which was regarded as an insult to all Indian ratings and thus served to inflame racial feelings; this assisted by rumours and inflammatory press articles and the sympathetic attitude of the Bombay public helped in the spread of mutiny from "Talwar" to other naval establishments.

(7) *Causes connected with the World War.*—There is considerable truth in the statement of Admiral Godfrey that the Mutiny may be described as a war "casualty" and to a great extent its causes are traceable to effects of over-expansion (Chapter 1, para. 25 of Report and 8 of Summary), e.g., recruitment of many unsuitable officers and ratings, inadequate training of new Reserve officers, paucity of old Regular officers and C.P.Os and P.Os; or to war conditions, e.g., Food, Recruitment propaganda, Demobilization. But that does not prove that mutiny was inevitable, the administration cannot be absolved from responsibility for not effectively checking the growing discontent in the Service. Besides, Commander King incident and the events that followed have no connection with the war conditions. (694)

(8) *Administration.*—Flag Officer Bombay has blamed Naval Headquarters, N.H.Q. blame Military Finance Department and *vice versa*. Criticism also levelled against F.O.B.'s Office. (695)

Recriminations between Regular officers and Reserve officers. One definite conclusion, however, from this is that all is not well with the R.I.N. organisation. The Commission cannot give any definite opinion on allegations against the N.H.Q. and R.I.N. Office, Bombay as it does not have sufficient material at its disposal to examine details of administration (696). The commission is prepared to concede that the administration must have been handicapped by rapid expansion and war conditions generally.

However, the following observations are pertinent:—

(a) Number of officers, 2,000, sufficient in relation to the 28,000 ratings—and yet Divisional System broke down. (697)

(b) Frequent changes of officers and injudicious appointments, etc. (697)

(c) Inaction or ill-considered action of Naval authorities was a contributory factor in the spread of mutiny, e.g., officers ordered to leave ships and establishments, Commanding Officers not fully informed of the situation and general lack of concerted policy. (698)

(d) Anti-Indian bias in Bombay office. (699)

(e) Complacency of Naval authorities as borne out by morale reports and complete ignorance of the mounting discontent in the Service. (700)

(f) History of previous mutinies. (704)

(g) About allegations against N.H.Q., Rear Admiral Rattray refers to lack of confidence in N.H.Q., domination of War Department and the control exercised by Military Finance. Defects in system prevailing in N.H.Q. leading to delays in disposal of business. (701, 702)

(h) Allegations have been made regarding victimisation of European Officers known for pro-Indian leanings. The Commission considers that this matter should be investigated at the highest level.

**85. Certain General Remarks.**—In qualification of what has been said before about the defects of officers the Commission thinks it would be fair to mention that no wholesale condemnation is intended and that in its opinion while there was a large number of bad officers, evidence suggests that there were also some

good competent officers who discharged their duties efficiently and conscientiously.

About ratings while there were some good types there also existed some poor specimens, argumentative, habitually disgruntled and impatient of discipline.

About C. P. Os and P. Os, some of them were more interested in their emoluments than in their duties and responsibilities. (706).

**86. Necessity for over-hauling the Service.**—Present Regulations of the Royal Indian Navy require to be changed in certain respects with special reference to the requirements of the country and its present-day conditions.

Suggestion as to the disadvantages of a wholly small-ship Navy and the advantages of having separate home ports for Northern and South Indian ratings deserve consideration.

Indianization should be accelerated both in the Service in general and in Naval Headquarters in particular.

Methods should be adopted to arouse in the minds of both officers and men enthusiasm for the Service and a sense of discipline based on spirit of loyalty should be cultivated to prevent the recurrence of Mutiny misleadingly described as "Strike", for in the considered opinion of the Commission the R.I.N. is essentially a good organisation with great potentialities and given good officers and men should develop into a great Navy of which India may well be proud. (707, 708)